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THE MAESTRO

by Charles Jellicoe.



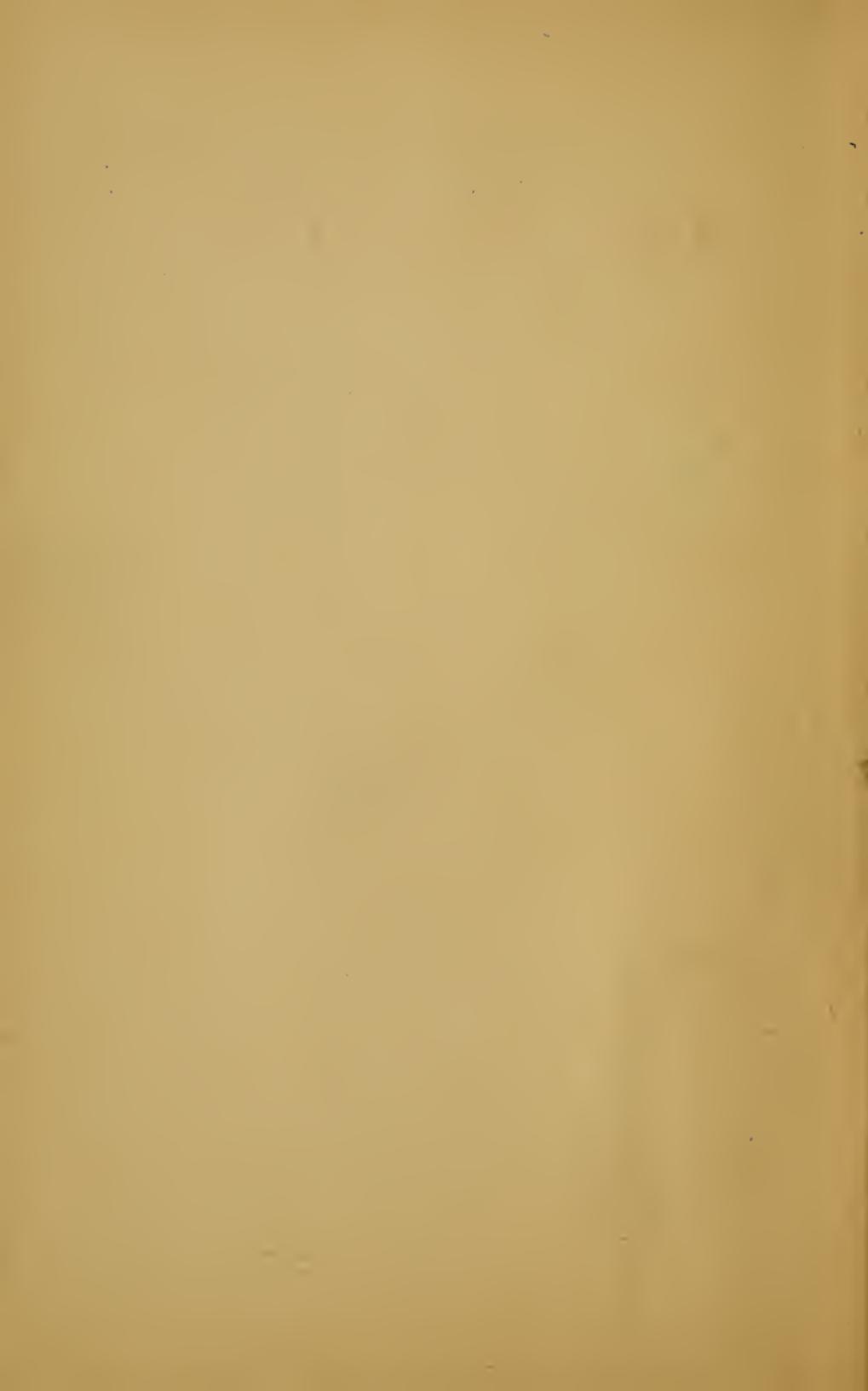
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THE MAESTRO



THE MAESTRO

PORTRAITS AND
OTHER POEMS

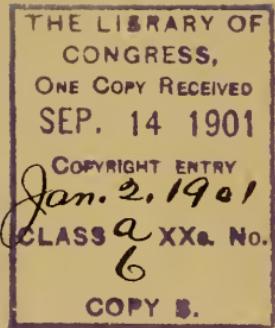
BY
CHARLES JULIAN

Doucet



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[1900]



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1900.

PREScription.

A pun—to begin with!

To be read by my friends, when there is a moment of time left over to them from the business of their own ambitions to think of the author as he would be known.

To be read by my enemies when they least think that their hostility has been of crucial service to me—trusting that the reaction from their ill-wishings may add new friends to my account.

To be read by them that know me not, when they would receive something from the hand of him who believes in men and women as the truest solution of the problems of men and women; whose joy is men and women, whose grief is men and women, whose religion is men and women, who loves music because he is "native to its billows and its deeps" and men and women because they prefigure all the forms of the beautiful that music shapes itself into.

To be thrust aside by them that are too deeply pre-occupied to contemplate the message before expressing an opinion.

Prefaces are the self-conscious part of books—the blush, as it were, of hesitancy, anticipating the blanch that comes with criticism. May I become self-conscious long enough to tell why I have gone so far as to publish a book of metrical writings—not a common thing for men engaged, as is the author, in the active routine of the newspaper business?

There is a time when one may become confused with the sound of his own work—as a musician may fail

to project his judgment out of the ensemble to take ear to the whole effect. As a swimmer in an ocean of verse, I have not been able, adequately to my uses, to fathom my own efforts. It is largely for this that I put before the eyes of a few the lines of odd moments—for the most part within three years—that I am able to sort out from the more unworthy ones I have written. It is that I wish to know what is the weight of these literary doings—for I frankly confess I do not know myself what the contents of this volume are worth. Nevertheless, let me say, though they should be damned by the scorn of my enemies, the faint praise of my friends or the indifference of them that know me not, I should be urged back into the realm of manuscript only to continue to express my most treasured thoughts as I have sought to express them herein. After all, it is but a "strife of heavens," or as I have said elsewhere of the race :

"He seems to attain,
But at each daily station
A mere aspiration
Makes count of his pain:
He sums up his searching—a wish not a gain."

I desire at this point to tender an acknowledgement to Mr. E. Bert Smith, the artist to whom is due the imprint on the cover of the book; also to Mr. John Dove, the printer who has so obligingly cooperated with the publishers in getting out a nice-appearing volume.

C. J.

Denver, December 6, 1900.

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THE MAESTRO.

*Sing, violins, and lesser strings,
Your strain of summer and the meadow;
Tremble with moonbeams on your wings,
And sylvan shadow.*

*Echo, ye Dryad depths of wood ;
Tell of the gnarled root and the acorn.
Ye hautboys, pipe Titania's mood,
Lodged in the hawthorn.*

*Answer, ye trumpets' stinging blare.
Paint me the castle wall and cavern,
Ye horns, whose mother was the air
That rocks the Severn.*

*Listen, ye hearts, with life o'erwrought,
And beat ye back the phantom measure ;
Weep with the wand that lifts the note
Of sorrow's pleasure.*

THE KING'S MINSTREL.

The King :

WHEN men, my Blondel, come within themselves,
I would they enter by the gate of song ;
Would that a jeweled portal—poesy—
Open for their stenched thoughts an outer world.
Miasma lurks where the rank root is fed,
But song saves men from festering in their caves.
'Tis thus with me. Unlock your instrument ;
Tread with your surest touch upon the strings,
Till they rebound in clusters of rich sound.
Books foam with vapor from a feverish spring :
Sing me a song before I plunge again.

Blondel :

I seize my liege's thought to kindle song :
Themes spread like fire and ripen from the seed
Of one Promethean flash. My master's mind
Is wrought upon and swollen with distress.
But give me leave to sing of that.

The King :

The king

Is never monarch of the throats of birds :
Sing no less free.

Blondel :

Then harken to the words :

A SONG OF THE MIND.

*In the sea of the air swims the monster, the mind.
It asks not a kernel of sand for a shore
Nor an anchor to dangle and clutch in the wind ;
For such is its manner—and more :
A manner that scorns at the shore.*

*It flaunts a wild freedom and battles the wave
Of the bottomless, measureless, harborless main.
It lashes to tempest the clouds while they rave
For their sleep that was shattered in vain—
Their sleep on this measureless main.
For the monster would feast out its deathless desire
On the spray of the zodiac breakers. In zest
It rends the rich flesh of the heavens afire
From the day altar set in the west—
Devouring the viands with zest.
With an appetite fierce for the portions of dread
It bursts its rude bulk through the cloak of the sky,
And carries the texture of heaven a-shred
From its shoulder spines streaming awry—
Threads that were torn from the sky.
And what are the hopes of its fostering rage?
And what will it win from the waste it defies?
The sun-parching hulk of the mad one be judge :
The leviathan floats where it dies,
It floats in the waste it defies.*

The King :

True, Blondel, true as the timbre of your voice.
Is truth a thing believed or just admired,
That men but look upon it with their eyes ?
I need no answer : thought's a mad device.
Come, let your fingers wander in the realm
Of softer song—a sonnet of the heart.

Blondel :

Never a day since hearts began to dream
Was music not atune to such a theme :

A SONG OF THE HEART.

"Almost thou temptest me—almost, almost,"
Sang thistle to the sun, "to fly away ;
Leaving my meadow-fellows self-engrossed,
To 'come a vagrant airling in thy smiles.
My heart flates up, and though there bid me stay
Grave thoughts of growth—thy freedom still
beguiles."

And "almost" soon is "lo, behold" become—
An August wedding ! Thistle changes song :
"What matters whether up and down I roam
And thoughts are playthings—thou art every-
where.
Where logic bites the earth, there wrong is wrong;
But not with thee, love, in the upper air."

The King:

Like fresh plucked fruit before its ichor turns !
So far the flood of song runs crystal smooth ;
But here's a rough bed. Blondel, how is this—
A soul song ?

Blondel : Well, songs are not prophesied.
They are like flowers—some trodden out and some
Set fresh upon a princess' breakfast board.

The King :

Let this be born at least : with birth the ground
Fulfilis its obligation to the flower.

Blondel :

The arrow stops the ruddock's morning song,
But neither bird nor arrow does the wrong :

A SONG OF THE SOUL.

*Day, like a dawning primrose, bursts its pod,
And light and life look prayerful up to God ;
Song's fetters melt
When morning's breath is felt ;
And Life holds promise in the brimming bud.*

*Morn, a rude hand of trouble, drags from rest
Kings to take up their mask of royal jest,
And Pelf his purse ;
And Cain takes up his curse.
And Death sits grinning in the craven breast.*

*Rises a star, serene and fresh with birth ;
E'en at the morn its brightness pales the earth
And dulls the sky.
Man halts with dazzled eye,
And tries the buckle of his narrow girth.*

*Exults a song within him—yonder bird
Lends him a joyous impulse, and the word
Reverence is born*

Heavens ! It ends itself ! My best string, too !
I said, my liege, songs are not prophesied.

The King :

The song hung on the tension of a string.
What of the man you sang of ? What's the end ?
First rose the soul star—then

Blondel : 'Tis fate, my liege,
That broke the song ; 'tis fate that does the rest—
The fate of God. I'll lead you on to that,
My voice unaided by the sound of strings :

A SONG OF FATE.

*Wouldst thou be kind to me?
Sharpen thy steel and dip its point with gall;
Strengthen and lift thine arm, and let it fall
Into my heart that hopes of thee.*

*Wouldst thou be false to me?
Pour out new honey, from October drawn,
That mocks its own taste in my mouth anon
And qualms upon its memory.*

*Be not too false or kind.
Give me the cup an hour a day at best:
Its falsity doth madden by its jest,
And sick my tongue and then my mind.*

*The steel through all the years !
My wounds are sweet, I cherish them with blows,
In all their red ooze resurrection flows.
Come sup with me the wine of tears.*

The King:

Ah, yes, for when the melody of life
Is snapped in twain and but a broken cord
Curls up in dumb forgetfulness, it is
The strain that came of travail and of pain
That seems the sweetest laughter. Melodies
May vanish mystic to an unknown world,—
But, to be heard again.

Blondel: The king is good,
And yet wherein should he have suffering
That his good works may echo after death?

The King :

There is no man but holds dominion
Over some province, and his tyranny
Is failure to be duly subject to
The subject. Reverence is power and power
In reverence, for to revere commands
The stringent impulses, the founts of life :
They pour their clear delights, their mercies, loves,
Whither they sense the invitation
Of welcoming channels—"Come thou unto me,
And I will give thee rest."

Blondel :

Amen, Amen !

THE NYMPH OF MUSIC.

THE thirsty pilgrim stoops beneath the tree,
And, drinking, dreams the fountain-nymph has
kissed his cheek.
E'en so, in some melodious symphony,
I find the tender presence that I seek.

A CRAVING.

MUSIC that rises in mountains—still not enough:
That masses and swells and sweeps to the pitch
full-breasted,
As clouds to the tempest, pressing impassioned and
rough
Over the edge of the East. More grandly crested
Than the prince and his endless armies coming to fight,
Assemble the hosts of music that I tremble to listen,
Gathers the whirlwind my soul rides upon as a knight
To the Battle of Spurs, to the victory—out of my prison !

Music that drives—that troubles the winnowing floor;
It sifts out men from the soul-chaff fleeting the solid :
Note who stay for the symphony—out by the door
Flutter the shapes of mind, scaled off from the valid.
Music that men sit to with their hearts unsheathed
And, hearing, they are not seared by the hot survival
Of hate for a brother; when, in the harmonies bathed,
One moment they have in their lives that they think no
evil.

RESTRAINT.

L EAVE it unsed, if it abate one inch
Thy strength to be tomorrow
What thou art today.
The fair melody o'erdone will ne'er regain
The tension that could make thee hark for
more.

A TOAST.

FOR who on happiness is bent—
His barrier, self, can scarce relent
To let him pass untroubled through
The golden fields I ope to you
In this first tasting of the wine,
In this first claiming to be thine
The pearl of woman's kisses.

Come—

Let's take us, you and I, the crumb
Of daily life, if never more it be,
And drink to it from living's briny sea.

But shall we throw the golden wine away,
Or bid the lingering kiss no longer stay ?
Tonight we happiness's counterfeit
Will plunge into.

Tomorrow—let us quit.

THEKLA, THE ACTRESS.

THE qualm of having flown and come again
To the sunk spot where rude reflection
Strips truth to nakedness ; passion kissed out ;
Reared thought that tumbled over its decay,
When pride that coldly kept the column firm
Sapped, and the rest could crumble at the touch ;
A corpse of all that was ; ashes that once
Were flickering warmth and messages between
Hearts that sat by and basked the night away ;
And, last of all, a hated crisp of self :
Such sat the creature—yes, a creature, too !

Robes that saw queens to death, and meaner frocks
That wrapped 'round, say, a just beginning soul,
Ripe for the play ; soft ringlets scattered there,
As though they had been torn away, dislodged
Like nestling vines from their pre-eminence—
Proving a fierce hand's fiercer heart ; and gloves
And slippers—other means in kind that tell
What the world knows from use , while she alone
Depicts what hearts—from maidens' upward—know :
All these things lie within the creature's reach,
To show where souls must sometimes touch the world.

"You who look to see this gone-out flame,
This nightly death when music breathes its last,
This ghastliness—can you not let the urn
Guard its frail charge in silence ?" So she spake.
"Forget you not the color of the flame,
For that is yours, and all the rest is—me !

And who am I? Ah, well—ask your own hearts:
'Twere better for them. I might answer you
As though you asked a cinder what it is.
Or—come again tomorrow: rather dawn
Should tell you what a day is than the night.
'Splendid,' you said of me. Ah, could *my* heart
Remember aught of it and lift the lid
That shuts my casket. But I give it you—
All, all the splendor, and the soul went too,
'Tis yours to keep, to press, say, in a book,
And not to wonder what it felt or thought."

Thekla looked up. All went, but one, away—
One who would make a withered flower confess,
That he might feel a severed petal's pain—
Know what it nods and smiles at when the bloom
Exults on the first May morning large and round,
And what it ponders waiting for the days
To flicker by like restless candle flame,
And what at last it dreams of when it dies.
He sought the language only of a throb—
The ungazed part that feels itself unseen,
Not burnished words for pulpit or for show.
As men may be intent, so was he then.
He loved, perhaps, her magic—thence herself,
For that he could not think the two apart.
To make himself think, much as lovers read
From books to drive dejection's vision out,
He lingered and he sought to separate
Picture from paint and stops from melody.
The heart remembers longer than the mind
When once the view is struck. Upon the face

That bore the splendor while the play was on
He looked back, swelled in heart a moment—then
Fetched to himself a poem of herself.
Eyes like the crescent and the star were there,
To start the fancy—eyes, but to begin ;
And all else must have reached the artist's hand
In kind from the same heaven—thought he so.
But still, how little this, had he not seen—
The scorn of static canvas, momentless—
The rise and fall and then the rise again,
As if the color of the crab-fruit cheek
Were tremulous, spent back and blushed once more,
Or as if pinks glowed up and down like coals ?
How little this had he not caught beside
Afresh each inundation of the soul,
Each blank sky, every sea-spread passion, burst
And fallen, as though 'twere not to please—all one—
The world, and buy another necklace with.
Hopes, dreams, made merry on her cheek like rays
Flecked from the silken mystery of a pool.
Her steps were thoughts, not merely modes for this
Or that remove—for when did else than thought
Know how to glide in rhyme ? He thought that, too.
All these things told their tales out of the depths.
Life spake there in its essence—swept it by
Like winds that shape in all the arts of sound.

Then Thekla turned and drove the whole away :
His dream was shattered and he found her there.
"Tell me," he said, "—the last truth ever told :
A cinder, spake you ? Give me back again
My ignorance—reality is cold.

What you attain to, is that all ? Or must
Your vot'ries think theirs is a ghastly feast—
Flayed flesh and soul whipped out—a Roman day ?”

Spake she, the shrunken tinsel-plant, to this :
“Why do you fear that plants should yield their juice,
Die and grow limp and then decay—no more ?
Why that a pack horse feeds his strength to toil
And falls when his season's up—the same as I ?
Mine is to crush myself and ply the pulp,
Mold in my hands myself—for you—for all.
Look you : a stiff mold—that's a queen's disdain ;
A soft one—that is charity ; and this
Is rude—for Audrey, say. The whole is me ;
But I am nothing—see me. What of that ?
World loves the pictures that I paint, and so
I spread my soul wide open on the boards
As though upon a palette. Brush and I
Mix boldly, love the thing and that is all.”

The listener troubles more his thought, and says
‘He cannot feel for such a soul.’ ‘For souls
Are better mantled with reserve,’ he thinks :
‘Cultured alone and still and given out
Like sun-rays through a worm-hole in a screen—
(A feeble shape of what he meant to say).’
He tries again and says it grieves him much
‘That Art can prostitute’—the same old thing.

The woman sneers. “I have met you before—
Or was it kin of yours ? At least the squint
Of mind somewhat remembers me a tribe.
Your artists—you would have them spread their grace

Of light and color just to mirror back
Their own pride—just for glory's sake. For what
Is sacrifice (to speak the truth) but just
A dream of something more—a better flight ?
Who truly give (but there is no such word)—
You call them prostitute and shun as death—
Those who exchange for worse and know it not.
Life's but a strife of heavens : which will win.
I love not praise but that it helps me on,
Nor gold, but that it pays my help : my love
Is for the hope I swaddled to fulfill.
No need of scatches—I am ever bold
To my last drop of blood. Drink it. Say,
How is it, if a martyr's mortal death
Is grand—startles your tears and heaves your thoughts—
How is it soul-death, died for cause, is not ?
Will you in heaven scatter flowers upon
The graves of the soul-dead ? 'Tis not what you teach.
I'll leave it all to them that know. For me
An instinct stirs within that I revere—
For great thoughts spoken in my own bold way ;
Tells me to give, to give, to give the best.
God takes care—strive : that's what I thought last night.
The west clouds are remembered long at eve
By the going sun. Sometimes they pale late—then
The world forgets them too. Perhaps that's me.

"I want no pity. Pity my garment, men—
The love, the rapture, the despair, the death,
The million jewel looks that flash from me.
They teach what I would have—receptive souls
For those whose daily exits none applaud.

I am naught—the gracious compliment
I yearn is throbings less for me than for
The children of my soul-contrivance. Give
Me tears ; with them I mix my Iris-hues ;
They are my guerdon, they the wine, such as
The fiddler's wand might smite a stony heart—
One ice-bound with its grief—and, Moses-like,
Draw out—the drink of sympathy. It is
Not piercing fire such as when mind flints mind—
Warmth, not splinters. Expect no argument :
It is of music's kind, soft, answerless.

"They say (their sermons buy them fame and—bliss)
That we—our way is self-destruction. Well,
The soul too soft to span its touch of the world
Were better wrapped in texture heaven-wrought
Than flesh like this—silk, aether, thought, God-breath.
Was't suicide when that wan mother gave
Her child the color of her cheek ? Sometimes
She dies. My soul may suffer too. I love
The forms I give my breast to—that's enough."

He whom the withered flower had been endowed
With voice to speak to fell away—or shrank.
The clock in yonder steeple struck twelve times,
Each with a burning brand. "Perhaps," he said,
"There is some might in weakness." And there stood
A woman in his presence, great and good.

MANSFIELD.

A SIDE from where the actor treads—the boards—
I have not met him. He cannot but be
A man, to be so many men. Could he,
England's old laureate, whose grace accords
With Nature's lines, have laden so his words,
Did he not love the daffodils, the free,
Unpoisoned air, the rainbow's mystery ?
And he—I bare my head—the lord of lords
Whose coronet is verse, could he so paint
His “fifty men and women,” were they not
Posed for his pen, or caught all unawares
From love's fine study of each filament ?
Our Richard knows—I see him touch their thought :
He can't have missed man's strivings and despairs.

IN CONTEMPLATION OF MILTON'S "LYCIDAS."

O, AS Lycid to be grieved—
O, Dead on what un'dearing wave,
To the chill brine a slave ;
And in rising find retrieved
The dank grass of my grave !

In thy languishment to lie
Were to mock mine earthen crust—
Live, while habergeons rust
And myrtles brown and laurels die,
In the proud dirge o'er my dust.

THE MOUNTAIN CLOUD.

TRADE with me moods, thou master spirit
 Of the gray canon walls, thou veil
 Of hovering souls, thou mist that guards the grail,
That none may near it.

Such clouds upon a race's brain
 Were soothing—saving the perplexed
 From plagues of civic system and pretext—
Symphonic—sane.

For what but the musician's wand
 Ordained thee? Jaded thought? There are
 Who ne'er yon Vorspiel's sounds divine and far
Have listened fond.

How like the mind stuff is thy web
 Of woven mystery, thy mass
 Of plasmic motion: reasons group and pass,
And suit the ebb.

How instinct with mind's sentient quiver
 Thy hosts are marshalled in a trice
 And severed: vain, to think of "stepping twice
In the same river."

We with a vision more devout
 A symbol yearn to quite express
 Thy soul's faith: thou to seeming nothingness
Must vapor out.

For, feathering skyward from the peaks,
 We see thee vanish at the pitch

Of measurable theories, with which
The day-man reeks ;

And, taking the infinite dress
Of inspiration—whither from,
I know not—(whence does music come ?)—
Leave a mere guess.

Shall we for thine ascension greet
Each other with a book of laws,
Or bloody battles fight to prove the cause
Of thy retreat ?

Enough for us to watch thee shape
And circle 'round the crag like thought,
Anchored to a problem, learn thy forms and what
Thy curtains drape.

To muse my way in silence through
These glacial castle ruins, search
Without hands, but spirit, arch by arch,
Some ancient clew ;

To poise or creep and dream, to drink
The world's old wine of knowledge, sleep
The intoxication off on yonder steep
Or cavern brink ;

Worth were this figured destiny
An age of words—debating years.
Thine is the palace of th' eternal seers—
A heaven to me.

Our desert tracks of thinking reach
Back but a day, so brief is sense ;

Thy solemn dreams can from beginnings hence
The oldest teach.

Sublime in the image of thought pour in
Through the portaled hills like a mist of ships,
Skirting the headlands ; feed thy subtle lips
On the *what has been.*

Thy never-ending dynasty
Has left no record in the balance—
The lesson of eternity is silence :
Why not for me ?

THE VOTE.

TEN million atoms massed into the sum,
Bulked one in weight, agreed in energy,
Tip yonder pinnacle of glacial sea—
Insensate boulder, void of reason, dumb.
Ten million atoms move—Jehovah's thumb
Has touched them, reaching out of mystery ;
Rolled them as one into the valley, free
As the primal clay of God may ever come.
Nothing withstands. And yet another rock
Has God ordained to crown his universe :
Ten million wills, assembled by the clock,
In one word sum the better for the worse.
Mighty material world ! But perfect not ;
For God today will loose the force of thought.

* FANNIA.

Personae { Paetus Thrasea, the Stoic, martyred by Nero.
 { Fannia, his daughter.
 { Priscus Helvidius, her husband.

SIT by me, Priscus, at the beech-tree root,
As by the knee of some benignant sire,
Kindly and silent. Nestle close and feel
How firm, how certain, clings this planted limb.
Your cheek against it—there : the spirit breathe
Of him who only left us yesterday.
Secure and tranquil as I look and yearn
Toward yonder branches, looked I then, when I,
But just a nestler at his shoe-tops, caught
The mingled sun of pleasantry and shade
Of grave affection from those father's eyes—
See, Priscus, how the leaves above you there
Are solemn first and next are gay with light :
What think they—list ? Ten spirits change their masks
Within a dancing breath of foliage.

He was my friend : how could I fear to kneel
Upon the ground, when he, too, loved the ground ?
For me, I knelt upon a simple turf,
A childhood's natural legacy. For him,
He saw me creep upon the seed and spoil
Of life, earth vitalized and plundered—yea,
Upon the measure of man's liberty.

* Written in condolence to Mrs. ——, upon the violent death of her father.

I am not old, but I am older now
Than when good Paetus Thrasea set his child
Between his feet and looked but spake no word.
Often I sat and gazed upon his thoughts,
Kerchiefed in silence, while he read or watched
The coming of the woman at his knee.

Pent up by my young years of feeble grasp,
Those halted thoughts of his were not in vain,
Shared with my further stature ; for I heard
And measured to their meaning. Then he held
My soul at arm's length, sure and unafraid,
Much as he once had swayed my girlish frame
In frolicsome mid-air. My quivering soul
Drank deep of that sensation, and he said
He felt it blossom—that's the word he used.

"Blossoms ask twigs," he said, "and twigs despair
Unless they borrow relish of the ground.
Therefore, despise it not that somewhere hid
Beneath the turf thy soul was cradled—nay,
Fear not to rest it there (if that be all),
When all the petals of thee seem to say,
'We weary of our hold.' For who would scorn
The seeding season, and with boast prescribe
For roots no mold, for tissue no descent ?
When thought unfurls its foliage and thy branch
Bends to the stern persuasion of the wind,
Love every gust for that its rage is vain,
Marking in what proud depths of princely flesh
Thy race has planted thee. And then again,
When lighter music comes and th' quiet moon

Pours out its mid-month wine upon thee, must
There be no let of brewing sap nor fill
Of vigor. Peace adorns the body; strife
Strips off the o'ergrown sprouts of error. Thus
The ancient mold of all thy parted race
Is thine to build in and to tug at firm.
Be prouder not, as fools and dreamers are,
Of prancing, kingly tree-tips and the pools
And ripples of the air that waft their heads,
Than the plain level of thy origin.
Be true to thy first soil, endure thy dust,
And all these else are added unto thee.
And all these else—these shows, these honors too—."

I am not weeping, Priscus. Would that I
Might seem upon the surface of my breast
A troubled stream. But would he urge my grief,
Whose stoic heart left mine its legacy?—
"Out with your balances. I'll ask you weigh:
Which endures more of pain—eh?—, mind or flesh?
Which gives the more by dissolution?
Health—is it not capacity for pain?
And that which of the other bears the load—
Is not it strong because it does endure?"
So spake the Stoic—let the question
Lie barren of an answer—lived it out.
And yet I weigh my thought and ponder, till
My thought seems chiefer mourner of the twain—
I start to think my tears are banked with stone.
Woman am I, and from my woman's heart
The swollen waves break o'er the stoic dam—

Strewing a league of wreckage. He was my friend—
He was my father—. Anaemic thought to say :
Beneath its debt to flesh affection palls,
Rising a-clear when charity no more
Hampers the daily life—immortal place
For him who held but now a mortal sway !
Yet who set free that butterfly of life,
Released it but to me. Somehow, they say,
That where the hand possesses, there the soul
Loses its faith in having. In my dreams
My soul fights hard against reality—
Fortunes but grin at us, their memory
And promise only smile. The gained sun scorches ;
Not so the coming or the parting gleam.
Tell me, Priscus, seems it right to you
That I should not return to yesterday
And say, "Tomorrow's nothing—I am yours ?"
Loss is a precious legacy to me :
I love it—since I have it so from him.

Time shifts our leanings and dependencies ;
We grope through newer freedoms but to find
We lean still. Priscus, here's a hand for you—
You'll find it firm as whence it took its growth.

THE MUMMY OF RAMESES.

AN artisan had made thee :

But that they told me one of History's tales,
That years were brought to fashion and to fade thee,

My thoughts had laughed thee by. But now,
Judging thy utter season, wonder dwells
Upon the reason—why and how
Thy dusty portion they forbade thee.

A tool or two had wrought us

A thing enduring and of more accord,
Of burnished leather—had we but bethought us :

An age is wasted in a plan,
A trapping of eternity ! We hoard
The ugly monuments of man—
So History and men have taught us.

A god, they say, has set him

A creature for his pleasure's glut—
An incantation lasting but to fret him !

The mysteries are over—so
They make a shrine of yonder crumbling hut,
Where God descended in the glow :
They move and gather and forget him.

RESEARCH AND LIFE.

AH, what—to find from under stones—
A vexing, cold, uncanny thing it is !
To rake the flats for annal-bearing bones,
To toil at surfaces—to please
The obstinate decayer with our bent
Of grieving inquiry into his skill so spent !

But to have seen today from out
A million years of living ! Not begun
With only scraps, be-scattered all about
From yester's feast-boards. Laid upon
Each year of things a year of life to measure—
Enough to drink each drop of History's blood
and pleasure !

TWO LESSONS.

TWO lessons underneath the sky
We learn while asking heaven how to die :
To fall in fierce attire of battle mail
And curse the last breath from the fainting sail
Of this soul-ship ; or, quiet under heaven,
Fold down the eye-lids and release unstriven
The spirit incense from the altar tent.
For death but levels every argument
That tosses mortal kind upon its tide.
It buries knave and lover side by side.

Two lessons underneath the sun :
One taught by April-bursting, just begun ;
Another gathered when each mortal broods
His arm is longest and the short intrudes.
In holy candor April lives and dies,
While man goes building up a life of lies.

UNIVERSALITY.

HOW artless are the hyacinthine dews possessed
Of sweets that feed no selfish day's sensation :
Were I still mine and my false self repressed,
How clear were then my spirit's distillation.

JEAN D'ALBRET.

"Jean d'Albret you were born, and Jean d'Albret you will die."
—*Catherine of Navarre*.^{*} *

OUT, out! The woman taint of thee again!
Thy nag's foot's caught itself i' the brush-wood heap:
A-care thee to the fore and cease the pain
Of drinking at a cup that holds thee cheap.
Yonder's the road: gain what affords the rift
In thy misfortune; beat not thou against
Its black sides. 'Tis the woman's underdrift—
Mad current of a will unrecompensed.
Who brought the puppet king to thee? Did I?
You called a man to hold the regal bench.
He lost: was his the blunder? Bargains lie.
He thought himself as much as you did, wench.

My heart draws with thee. But an ace of time
To juncture with a friendly camp is worth
Philosophies a score today; nor rhyme
On fallen trees will bring the forest forth.
Ah, well! Moan thou at me—and let thy beast
Trip awkward hoof-marks in the road. Thou fain
Wouldst cry against the bottom's blessing—rest:
D'Albret—the king—and then d'Albret again!

* Jean d'Albret, in the sixteenth century, married Catherine of Navarre. He was a noble of Aquitaine, inferior in rank to herself. The troubles between Spain and France forced the king and queen to flee on horseback across the Pyrenees. During this flight Catherine gave utterance to the words quoted. D'Albret replies. [Written to _____, upon the loss of his fortune.]

For there's no farther falling from the ground.
To have not is no loss : to save the wreck
Is hope again, and summits anxious-crowned.
What's had to lose is got for Fortune's sake —,
The moral hence !—to tease the victim's wit.
Dame's checker-board was jostled by a knee,
And we fell out the row where rulers sit.

— Look there, your jade has got his halter free.

What? Folly's meanest fool ? Your passions fume.
My world a motley color ? Times there are
When days are black, and night piles up the gloom :
Thou mayst mistake a surface free of scar.
D'Albret—the king—and then d'Albret again !
The king ! A bubble burst ! Long live d'Albret.
A fool, you say—but with a wise man's pain,
Fleeing his face i' the glass. My pretty, say—
Fate strung my heart to thy stern plectrum's touch :
Thy words can deeper than their depth is wont
Sink where they find a bottom burned for such.
Feels depth its darkness less than height its vaunt ?
Self felt its falling and began to shrink
From question, ere the vice of words or look
Of questioner could mount upon the brink
And measure wantonly the way it took.
Too well it felt the throne sink out of sight,
Too well my reach accused the flattery
Of effort, and forewarned my day of night
At self's first hoping out of its degree.
A penalty ? For what ? For something thought
That might be done ? Discovery were sin.

Or for my birth? A universal blot!
Not *penalty*, but pitying "*must-have-been.*"

The bottom's reached—so much. 'Tis only hard
Because the falling reached it. Make reply
Against the pain? I am not so ill-starred
That like a dog I only live to die.

No pain—life not at all; for pain has place
As much as living. He who wrought in kind
The bursting sheathes, the scars on Nature's face,
Forces his law on man's debating mind.

To yield—no scar marks where the let was made;
To fret—your passions sharp his argument—
You call me fool that I do not tirade
And plow the surface up with discontent.

Ah, yes, d'Albret's the valley's name again;
And is its last name worse than was the first,
Or better for the leaving? Not in vain
Learns vale the stone that knew the summit erst.
Prithee, scorn not upon my broken reach
Because thy crown was lost in being tried;
For greater were it to have stemmed the breach
Than to have *been* upon the other side.
To be, and not to have—the *being* not
Is self's declivity. My aims, I own,
Mislearned and paid the learning of their lot.
The secret is: the king, and then the throne.

You said so? Yes, from out the bitter chink
Of a woman's heart. But would not, if it could,
That heart reverse it? Think, my pretty, think:
D'Albret—the king—and then d'Albret, is good.

MODDER RIVER.

"Darkness after dawn."—*Lord Methuen.*

THE night was saddled on the wind,
And darkness galloped whither
Its steed recked—nor our ears could find
The place where darkness rode was either yond or hither
Night spurred his steed about the tops
Of dismal grates and ledges,
Careering where the blank wall stops,
Despairing where the black sea mingled with the edges.

My thoughts—they harkened to the wind
The night rode, as to breakers ;
With buffets turned they, lost and blind,
And tossed through many a sweep of mad sea, miles and
acres.

O, could they gather on the roof
And try to snatch the bridles ;
Lest, trod beneath the tempest's hoof,
They spatter like the murk, or dust of fallen idols.

For worlds are saddled on the wind,
Their human battles boundless, dismal ;
We toss and, moaning, cannot find
A level place of rest from struggles dark, abysmal.

STRATTON.

THE man for whom money was meant,
No doubt,
Was quite as well off and content
Without,
Ere the gods of Olympus, who never go wrong,
Divined him out of the throng.

And who would his money begrudge
Must dare
The Olympian judgment to judge,
Up there,
And rob, not the man, but the Athanatoi
Of him whom they chose to employ.

How made the Immortals their choice,
You ask.
They voted with unerring voice :
“The task
Is finding a hand that never is cold
While handling bargains in gold.”

How many a judgment is parched
And charred,
Whereover the heaven is arched,
But scarred
By the track of the glory of day—the sun :
A fortune that’s never, though won !

Who spends on that meanest of men,
One’s self,

A single thought to each ten
On the shelf
For the building of works in the name of the race,
He finds for his money its place.

The poet is known from the first
As such.

The harper a harper is nursed
To the touch.

Do poet and harper remember no more
What music and verses are for ?

From poverty's pit there emerged
The wretch,*

Who knew what money, when urged,
Would fetch.

Did Stratton remember no more, as you,
What unurged money could do ?

As poet has mastered his rhyme,
No less

May wealth in its good seeding time
Express

The beauty of having—the truth of the grave :
The master of life, not the slave.

* The author has been urged by two friends (acquaintances, also, of Mr. Stratton) not to permit this term to apply, through the danger of being misunderstood, and therefore of giving offense to one of our best known townspeople. I am steadfastly opposed to rewriting that which has once passed from my hand as "good" after being carefully considered. There is no reason why the classic meaning of a word should give way to the modern, especially since the context bears out so unmistakably the esteem in which I hold Mr. Stratton. "Wretch" is not a term of reproach, but rather of commiseration.

To use, not to have, is the gift.

The health

Of him who discovered the rift

Through wealth !

So come, let us drink, though we have not a cent,
To the man for whom money was meant.

At the latter's expense—of course.

GOLD AND HUMANITY.

If money were mine,
What a dream I'd lose
Of the many that money are after—
The bakerman's sign,
The mart of the Jews,
The cheat of the mountebank's laughter.

If money were yours—
How soon to forget
Your trade and its troublesome earnings !
What labor endures
For the price of its sweat
Is paid in the coin of its yearnings.

I give, when I take
Of the rank called rich,
My glimpse of this army of gainers,
My life for the sake
Of release from the ditch,
From Adversity's train of retainers.

What wishes are left
When wishes are fed
On the power to command every service ?
Of struggle bereft,
Our last lesson said,
What battles shall thereafter nerve us ?

SEVEN DISTICHS ON LIFE.

AND shall we live and live to build a past
For some no fairer future, which shall last
Its struggle out and then in turn devise
The legacy on other bye-and-byes ?

I sat consuming all the other day
Ten poems writ ere passion quit the clay
Of their forgot designer—warm with breath,
As if a birth of yesterday—not death !
And yet with all their quivering life, for me
The fossil's impress mocks their mystery.

Measure my distance in the world's relay
And where steps in mine heir upon my stay :
'Tis ye who love me, while we gaily sing
Our songs together, that redeem the thing.

*THE DEATH OF YESTERDAY.

THE pictures will not blur :
The leaves—he sees them blowing still
In brown confusion down the hill,
As yesterday they were.

The sounds die not away :
The laughter of the somber elms
His darkened spirit overwhelms
With grief for yesterday.

Sweet yesterday !—because
In it he found where a heart could throb,
And not be chilled ; where yet a sob
Was one of Nature's laws.

A grateful time—and why ?
The frowns of yesterday were smiles
Ere they had been forgot ; new trials
Were given birth to die.

The world was big, but not
So big by far that it could fail
Encircled be with the airy sail
His idle mind begot.

There hold his heart at bay
Two warning bugle notes that wake
The morning of the man to take
Its welcome into day.

* To my brother John at 21.

The day of youth is dead.
A night between, it seems—and now
The day of manhood greets the brow,
Trembles upon the head.

GREENCASTLE.

GREEN are the trees 'round the castle of learning ;
Green the hearts, minds and souls, daily returning
In sprays of spring shades and lusters outwardly yearning

In this castle of trees, where the word "desolation"
Prints not in the book of thy sweet generation,
Nor age falls upon thy fair world of probation :

The flowering, the cleaving of stems, nay—disaster
Of youth, when the man and the job are the master—
Are not for this world but for one that is vaster.

A world that to this is as though the religion
Of recompense bore thee from this dreaming region,
To rudely awake in the bark of the Stygian.

For soon is the end of thy heritage nearing—
How briefly thy season lives : life is a-yearning
Faster than fast, and the green leaves are searing.

Yonder they lean not upon one another.

Yonder a man is a man, not a brother.

Into the mold the leaf-shapes must smother.

Live in the deep of their green till they sever :
When they are green no more, fall they forever—
Live, youth, love and learn, for the memories! "die never."

As the sweet days pass, let herald and vassal
In the green moat, midst the wine and the wassail
Of youth's exultation, cry "Long live Greencastle!"

* PENELOPEIA.

[Penelope leans with her left hand elevated against a pillar, contemplating the great bow of Ulysses that stands in a niche before her, In the rear a crowd of her suitors, visible through an arched way, are playing at dice. The queen thus addresses herself to the master of the bow]:

UNSURE thy coming back, and where thou art,
Struggles o'erbreast me, tyrannize my thought—
And with no promise but a prompting heart,
To tell, to tell that Lethe claims thee not.
One lasting scar of day-to-day disgrace
Is living's metaphor, to such I hark—
A cruel cicatrix on the water's face,
Form of the healing waves behind thy bark.
Hope has a life in every pulse. My voice
Scorns at dividing space, and there's the gain—
For whether is despairing's vainer choice
To call no more or still to call in vain?

[To the suitors.]

Let him be dead, ye hounds—forgetting's false
To that etheric mold his manhood left;
And be his strength gone with the sunken pulse,
Still of its image I am unbereft.
Aye, and the spot he stood—there I beside,
Knowing his mind is dead to flesh, can stand,
Not custom's widow but his memory'r bride—
My wedding music comes from the Ionian strand
And you, wolves at my window, can or must

* To —— after the death of ——.

Your blindness to a woman's heart's excuse
Vex her commission of a sterner thrust ?
Court you surrender in a woman's truce ?
Your little minds divide, divide, divide,
And cast their lots for love or lust—and fie !
They reckon not upon contamin'ed pride
Or desecrated will—and where am I ?
You pluck and shake the petals from the flower,
Your rude desire rewarded with the stem.
'Tis not for wolves to cherish, but devour—
Shall I use question with them ? Answer them ?
What foul convention must the day bring forth,
When such as you would guide the sun ? The gods
Spanned out its orbit 'round a nobler earth
Than yours alone.

[The rattle of the suitors' game reaches her ears.]

Lose, lose ! Or win ! My odds
Are infinite, and less than nothing : self,
Impregnable wager, nor too hard to scale,
Is the one lot I bank against thy pelf—
Only one self—a lonely one—and frail.

[The bow again.]

O, my Ulysses, where's the sin to end,
And whereat does renascence' right come in ?
Just at forgetting's winding sheet ? Defend !
Your mind, my distaff—to unspin and spin.
Laertes' sheet shall be thy memory's, too :
Unfinished, unforgotten. • What if then
They should by day o'ercrowd thee while they woo,

I will at night remember thee again.
I wind and wait, and wait and wind for thee.
But what thee? Wind and wait I just the same.
The service' sake—for such rewards are free :
I have them daily in deterred shame.

THE WAY OF HER.

S TRETCHES a bay in front, whence the fair ship puts
out,

As each new springing of the summer's breeze
Exults her sail and starts her restless keel.
Yesterday she went far to the Levant, and then
Somewhere far else, her master only knows.
Tomorrow is the day when the foreboding wind
Will bring to port again the fairest of the wave :
Back into harbor let her come and be
To the inland mart a symbol of inconstancy—
Wearied inconstancy, worn with the wave it strode,
But not less true because there intervenes
A summer 'twixt her harbor's last embrace
And her input again. Does the harbor pine
Of loneliness when the last sail of her
Fades to a speck 'twixt heaven and the deep ?
All more delight is there upon the shore,
When the wave glints with her reflection
Again ; when November binds, and alongside
She kisses her city's cheek for the wintertime.

CUSTOM.

AT its mooring strains the heart,
Like a mad boat at its chain,
Clanking chill as, start on start,
Every leap reins in again.
In its mimicry of motion,
Thus my spirit rides the ocean.

God may understand—not I—
Things that tremble on the tip
Of the waves, then by and by
In the bowl of reason dip.
God may understand the flutter
Of the things that climb the water.

Boats are moored to yonder edge,
Called the world; and some ashore
Seize the lines and, hauling, judge
Every length and look for more.
Shall I not through this distortion
Wonder what's to God his portion?

Granting me a slackened line—
Somehow there's a flush of waves
Dashing over me and mine;
Spirit of me ill behaves.
Is God master of the danger?
Or entrusts it to a stranger?

If a longshoreman—I fear
Less a dip of yonder prow

Than a custom insincere,
Whether yesterday or now.
Let him answer me the measure
Of his precept at my pleasure.

Clanks the chain of my restraint.
God owns all the outward sea,
And I halt at no complaint
'Gainst the shore that fastens me.
Just because the sea has distance,
Am I held by law's resistance ?

Formulas forget the ground
Whence they sprung, and meaningless
Ropes of hemp—by which are bound
Jerking boats—are my duress.
If the shoreline be the social,
Let the bonds be true and crucial.

SUBMISSION.

Lais (thinking) :

MAD with brute agony and meaningless
Desire, your fingers fierce with the grasp even
Of a spent climber cursing on the brink—
Passion's neutrality : where others might caress
This mount of tresses and with reason spare
Its soft resistance, you—too gross to think—
You clutch the folding hair
And drag it down from heaven;
Distort its language, vainly composed to speak
To the chaste past, the time it spread
Music over the alabaster of my cheek.

A kiss! Poison! My lips endure to give
Wanton response to the serpent's lengthening tread—
A gurgle only, for the game's to live ;
The game's to yield, the player's 'tis to urge
Each fit of lust, to break, to twist
The bough of virtue bending in the surge.
Did ne'er you hear betimes the word "resist?"
What wonder
That you tear regret asunder !

You cannot hear what I am thinking. Strain
Your drunk perceptions o'er the struggle. Put
Your ears close to my temples. How they gloat
And revel in the fever that I feign,
Repaying double for each gasp that's sold !
They cost me nothing. Should suspicion note

The number that these fickle breasts enfold—
Their fury also tread I under foot.

What! You have reached the ash-pit? Over the
edge

So soon! Poor corpse! The air is hung with webs
That spiders wove o'ernight upon the ledge.

For once you are down to my level. Here am I—
At the bottom where the passion never ebbs,
Ne'er starts, but answers passion with a lie.

I laugh? O, yes, I laugh. Why not? (*aloud*) Ho,
ho!

You would not be a man if else were so.

Demosthenes:

Have you been dreaming that you rouse so short
And speak? Come, I must get me to the court.
How wise a woman! Otherwise than men
You would not have us. I shall come again. (*Exit.*)

Lais (to maid):

Have apricots for breakfast brought at once—
(*Musing*)

Not every animal's a pig that grunts.

A BACHELOR'S CALENDAR.

ANOTHER notch in my cane—that will do:
Another count in the game,
The sum of my chains.
My seasons are not by years, but by fresh disdains,
Smiles that have all but seemed the Fates' avenue
To the garden of flame,
Thoughts that accrue,
As seconds, to the balance of the one-hour queen while
her savagery reigns.
The last was a look,
Hardly riped to a kiss,
Though it stayed out its sway
Like a nap that is spent in a book;
And her late banished minion,
Having swathed his regrets, cuts a new notch and goes
to the play—
Laughs in the spray
On the sea and the coast of the champagne's dominion,
Like scintillant flies by the bay.
Just as well,
Let us say,
That the sign of my season is this—
(Never tell)—
When it comes to the blight and the bliss
'Neath the curtain rung up by the hymeneal bell,
Let the Lohengrin song make them glad, and the old
world revolve—
I shall answer by one more notch (thank the Lord!) and
swear by my former resolve.

WALT DAVIS.

DON'T know Walt Davis ? Hell !
You live in Denver, and have not
Discovered Denver's brightest spot ?
Well, well !
You'd better read The Post and learn
A thing or two—where now and then
Walt has a column.

Certain men
Were born fools. A few of us discern
God smoking cynical cigars
Over the misadjustments on
His footstool. Walt is one
Whose soul, when it shall reach the stars,
Shaking the rose-root from the clay,
Will make God throw his smoke away.
In that sad moment—when, I guess,
The last edition's gone to press,—
Our Walt will slap the Ancient on the back
And say :
"Old man, your world's a wonder in its way,
So beautiful I loved to live down there :
No lack
Of lilies, children, friends and mirth to spare.
I swear, old man, it is a Master's job ;
But why did you ordain the hypocrite and snob ?"
Walt's heart is such as to o'erlook himself
In seeking this reverse of all creation :
If sham and snob were laid upon the shelf,
Walt's pen would be without an occupation.

MY PIPE AND HIS BAD HABITS.

A JOLLY good dream-fellow
Is my pipe—
Is my pipe;
When he breathes so fresh and mellow,
Fresh and ripe—
(Dern a snipe !)
But when he begins to snore,
Then I dump him on the floor.
There's no dreaming left when he begins to snore.
Then I let him have a rapping
In the ribs—
In the ribs;
For there's an end of napping,
Save in dribs—
(Curse his nibs !)
Only—as I said before,
He's a dream-friend to the core,
If the pesky feller only wouldn't snore.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD.

I HAVE a love on the other side of the world ;
And sometimes, walking out through the autumn
ricks,
Or in the woods, watching the leaves as they swirled
Out of their gullies, where they yearly mix,
I have wondered whether our thoughts were as far be-
tween
As the deep orb that divides us twain.
She does not know that my thoughts are there,
Where she sleeps when the sun is dividing his time
In a land that faces away from her,
Nor that to her slumbers I am dreaming a rhyme :
Would that I felt I was only *not aware*
Of her thoughts, as she of mine, when they're here.
There can no argument convince a heart
That 'tis not loved—still wanting bitter proof ;
For ever Absence plays his magic art
Of weaving hopes and falterings—warp and woof.
This being so, let the deep orb remain
And the autumnal color of it all divide us twain.

LOVE'S PAGANISM.

T is not gold but glitter that we spend,
Nor roses but their perfume that we buy ;
And if, in Nature's upward, outward trend,
You say you love me, dearest—is it I ?

The glitter and the perfume dwelt the same,
Once on a time, in nebular disform.

They go again, and each forgets its name—
Is that you love—and I—so frail a charm ?

'Tis only mass that dies not, but, sweetheart,
How little justifies its bulk the hour
Of its creation. 'Tis the dying part,
Gone to the mind's grave, that redeems the flower.

Why ask for more? You may acquit your reach.
Choose, that your choice may go transform
again.

If you and I but facets are to each,
The jewel-weight can only fall—but when ?

Only express ourselves—to me your soul ;
Be it but mortal, and in turn will I
Give out the glint of passion. We are whole
In all that's best of us until we die.

A PULSATION.

“THE girl I love does not love me,”
Quoth my heart in its agony.
Then over there I caught her glance :
She smiled at me from the midst of the dance.
Quoth my hopeful heart : “Wait and see.”

* IHRE ZWEI BLÖE OIGEN.

SILKEN, consummate blue! Woven
With no bastard threads of the sloven;
O'ercast with luster manifold
And rich in evanescent groups—
In summer thus the twilight tent
Of heaven o'er her minions bent.
Sweet dreams from her baptismal font
Fall on the world. Be-lised, be-souled,
'Comes yonder valley where she stoops.

Behind the *wald* inclining where,
Fertile with sunshine and with dew,
The fields lie silent in their dream
And vineyards stretch beside the stream—
She bends and fondles into blue
The clusters, with the deepened air
To dye them and within them pour—
The magic liquor of the season's store.

But thy two eyes—the nest thy soul
Smiles from and asks me in—the thrall
That holds me tenderly and near,
Reading my breast: they luster clear
The speech of life and love and pleasure,
In charm and blue do they out-treasure
The silken heavens rich and bright
That stoop upon a summer's night.

* A Paraphrase, from the Yiddish of my friend, Jacob Marinoff.

From under the sea swims the sun aloft,
Proud as an empress. Every morn
She bathes her cheeks in the deep of the sea,
And thinks no other quite as she
Can cast a shadow as she mounts,
Blinding all beauty with her scorn.
Thinking, she climbs—nor aught can soft
The look of pride, where nothing counts.

Cleansed is her face, her rays combed out,
Her morning toilet done. She smiles
Coquettish from her queenly bout,
Grows bold, and overbrims her wiles.
Behold! When thou appearest, love—
Her time of pride upon the throne
Thy look of luster, from above
Discovered, drives into the evening zone.
The empress flushes red—her pride
Escapes ashamed adown the other side.

LOVE'S PARSIMONY.

GIVE me the desert.
Why do they seek for place
In the bare hearts of men ?
Why in a loved one's face
Do they look again
For that which is lost,
For a gain that is less than the
cost ?

Give me the desert.
Yes, my love is elfish :
She is splendid and fine.
But the desert is not selfish—
All that it has is mine.

Give me the desert.
Let me lie on the lips of the sand,
On the parched cheek of it—
worn
With my journey from Samarcand.
There is no fear of scorn
In the smile of the waste—
No last expectation misplaced.

LOVE'S BEGRUDGING.

HOW easy 'twas to say good-bye
To June, and let her roses die.
We little thought that time could change
So quickly into colors strange ;
We little thought that summer meant
To leave us nothing as she went.
How rude the winter bartered cold
For summer, and for roses, mold.
With reckless lisp we bade good-bye
To June, and let her roses die.

Good-bye, thou garden of desires—
I may not hope to linger in thee ;
 For, to win thee,
 Font of fires,
Cluster of designed hues,
Were to wholly win—or lose.
And, to parcel the attires
 Of thy roses and thy shadows,
Were to leave me in the mires
 Of the murked and trodden meadows.

Did you not see how jealous June,
As heartless as a king's buffoon,
Was lavish with her treasures while
She stayed to lovers' eyes beguile ;
But brushed them like a web aside,
Nor left them with us when she died ?
"Such graces winter never knew ;
Possess them, but possess me too—

Possess them, for I leave you soon:
My wealth is mine," said jealous June.

Good-bye, possession,—and good-bye,
Return of unobliged dominion.

Music's pinion
Flies not high
From the string that gives it strength—
Flies, but only goes its length.
Think that merely taste can buy,
Merely choice can music flatter?
Never! Hear the singer cry:
"Love me first—else curse the matter."

A BIT OF WHITMANESQUERIE.

I SAID good-bye to her over the shoulder of my friend :
They to their heathcote, I to the cave of my dark self.
In that ripe moment of two motives,
Why should I twist either from its stem ?
I can have both :
My love in silence and my friendship boldly greeted.
They may forget the day, the hour, the minute,
Aye, and myself.
Though I be suspected of dreaming in the distance,
A figure on the bleak plain,
Watching the vanishing shadow of a horseman
And the growing dark after the setting sun.
My dreams are my own ;
God gave them their world.

LOVE'S AWKWARDNESS.

A NODDING sunflower, bold and bad,
Grew restless of his garden.

"These stalks," said he,
"That grow with me,
Are quite enough to drive me mad,
My disposition harden."

The sunflower boldly tossed his head,
And tried to shake his fellows.

"Why stay a weed
And run to seed;
Why breathe such atmosphere," he said,
"And languish with the yellows?"

He consequently hooked his chin
Across the fence adjoining,
And rolled awry
That cyclops eye,
And grimaced with that noonday grin
That baffles all recoining.

A violet in the neighboring patch
Grew modest in the shadow.
Upon her tuft
Of mosses soft
She stayed religiously to catch
The morning's early credo.

She sang, this dainty little dip
Of fascinating color,

A song so mild
She scarcely smiled
The madrigal upon her lip,
An "unheard melody"—no fuller.

'Twas she the sunflower, tall and rude,
Looked on, and loved the creature—
At least he thought
His heart had caught
The fever to which we allude ;
And vainly tried to reach her.

The sun laughed while his full-grown child
Fought, and the ground resisted
His mad desire
To spurn the mire—
To climb into the open wild
He fiercely writhed and twisted.

A crack had, fatal, in the fence
Been warped there by the weather—
A crack this flower
For many an hour
Had watched, but feared no recompense
Would bring their fates together.

This crack, ere long, the sunflower's neck
Had seized within its clutches ;
His rage, perhaps,
Was blind to traps
Of passion that he failed toreck,
Like many a lover doomed to crutches.

One jerk too many, and the head
Of him who had known better
Rolled in disgrace
Before the face
Of her who lately from her bed
Had challenged him to get her.

Nor yet a challenge either, for
She looked at him with pity,
Nor said a word
That could be heard
Beyond "Poor thing, he smiles no more,"
And went on with her ditty.

CYRANO.

AH, to conjure art up for another,
Serve with mind a lover hail and swarthy !
But rather would I all my verses smother
Than summon brilliance for a self unworthy.

LOVE'S TRAGEDY.

THOU subtle thing of magic,
Thou substance pure and fresh,
Who christened thee the tragic,
And bosomed thee in flesh ?

Who mingled with thy potion
This drug of deadly price ?
Who rooted out devotion,
And planted there device ?

Who hung with lace and tinsel
Thy least ethereal charm ?
Who skilled the painter's pencil
To fancy thee a form.

Say, wert thou born of spirit
Or fashioned of the sod ?
"Of earth-mold," some declare it,
And others say, "from God."

It happens that my fancy
Seeks yonder heart's return :
A subtle necromancy
Creeps in to bid me burn.

It breathes upon my passion
The semblance of a flame ;
Straightway the whole is ashen,
And thou art but a name.

TWO REGENTS.

No less a queen is she that rakes the hay
To him that woos her on the mow
Because she wears not coronets on her brow—
And who's to say
For what he takes her on the nuptial day ?
I wager that an age from now
Their son's son does not choke upon the vow
His sire may pay.
Two regents—let them sit upon their throne,
Select their minions, mark their boundaries out ;
Though others may with rude opinion
Close them about.
Queens from the bee up feel their dress,
Nor she of lace nor she of tan the less.

MY LOVE'S HABILIMENT.

A-KNITTING sit I with my pen—
Planning the texture that shall be,
That thou mayst wear the lines for me,
My Lalagen.

Hop'st thou for prouder dress than this—
That it shall wrap with warmth, in place
Of form and coldly Grecian grace,
Thy queenliness ?

Some steal their threads for treasure's sake,
But thief am I so less than clever,
I cannot crib—and may I never
False honor take.

Thus must a cloak of blemished dyes
Speak for thy station in my court,
And thus a veil of humbler sort
O'erdrop thy eyes.

No pages follow in the train
To lift the folds at every turn ;
Ungraceful rhymes trip up, and spurn
The artist's pain.

Be ardor said to have design
And rhythm : mine were surely thus
Endowed with Art's best impetus
And form divine. *

But ardor formless is and born
Without a language for its creeds :

It is a breath of warmth that needs
No mantle worn.

My knitting pen would fain my heart
Speak out, and o'er thy shoulders cast
A garment from the throbbing past—
A work of art!

But here's what poet never wove—
A rag he found beyond his kiss
When first he broke his chrysalis ;
And that is love.

THE BUD ON THE STREAM.

OVER the edge of my errant boat
I dropped a bud from my hand before me :
A thoughtless thing that I let it float
On the simple tide of the lake that bore me !

I watched it drift. 'Twas a dainty sight,
To see it dip in the face of the water,
While the ripples built up their curls of white,
As the sea-god might for his favorite daughter.

But the panting breast of the languid lake
That wore the flower I had dropped upon it
Doubled its passion and threatened to take
My prize away from the reach that won it.

I heeded me not the drifting away
Of the flower I plucked from the bush that bore it.
I said, "Fear not if it float astray ;
A dip of the oar will soon restore it."

Then I hooded my thought and returned to dream
Of things aside from the bud I had gathered ;
And, waking, I missed from the swelling stream
The prize I might have kept till it withered.

Withered ? That was the cheerless plea
I offered to clear myself of the keeping,
After the bud was lost. But for me—
What were the use of a bud left sleeping ?

How many dips of the oar can find
The spot where the cat o' nines conceal it ?
How many ripples pressed by the wind
Can bear me whither the reeds would steal it ?

TENNYSON TO THE CONTRARY.

THEN is the time to love—
Not when the sprout is green
And the sma' buds blush to be seen,
Nor the woolly weanlings drove
Innocently out to play :
They have not yet learned to know
That summer weather turns to snow
Before they reach another May.

Then is the time to love—
When the vine goes no more in green,
But trembles, droops for what has been,
Serving the winter's end to prove
More serious proverbs to the mind ;
When the bare boughs their knuckles beat,
And the leaves, eddying in the street,
Stir mental blusterings of the wind.

ONCE AROUND THE WORLD.

ETERNAL the sun-cycle, proud of its crest,
Rolls on to the West;
Nor ever arriving,
It faints not in striving—
This type of the best:
It moves on eternal, nor trembles to rest.

Its journey ends not, and the wheel never yet
Has seemed to forget
Each day of its travels
A new round unravels,
A new thought is met—
For the West is the promise, the East the regret.

The eyes of the worshiper looked on thy grace
From his eastern place.
With all his bestowing
Of vows on thy going,
This first of the race
Shook off votive trappings and followed apace.

From day unto night, from the wax to the wane,
He seems to attain;
But at each daily station
A mere aspiration
Makes count of his pain;
He sums up his searching—a wish not a gain.

And Hope flounders on to the gate of Remorse.
Though it calls for a horse

All saddled and fleeter
Than day's horameter,
It speeds out its force
And faints ere it saddles the sun in his course.

• • • •

Perhaps, let us say, ere the race had begun,
'Twas given to one
To measure man's issue--
The first in the tissue
The epochs had spun,
The first th' experience of reason to run.

Perhaps, without annals from which to discern
The griefs he must learn,
He went on his mission
To grasp each condition
From birth to the urn,
Frontiersman—what waters to drink or to spurn.

The first to have lived and the first that became,
In the first blush of shame,
The apostle of wonder,
Who guided from under
His hopes to the aim,
The West of his life from the East of the same.

How great to meet first and succumb to the tooth
Of death and the truth.
He thought as he lengthened;
His appetite, strengthened,
Gave soul to the youth
That trod out his span to the ending forsooth.

By thee in his feeding-crop urgently nursed,
The discoverer's thirst
Went gallantly warring ;
The first life exploring,
He sprang on and burst
The buckle that held him a child at the first.

Elate in his privilege, venting the rage
Of a primaeval sage
On the sorrows of living,
He chained his misgiving
And went forth to wage
The sally through youth and the mast'ry of age

• • • • •
So much for a life—and then for a tribe
Its record inscribe
On the course of its herding,
Where hoofs tracked the wording
In letters of glibe ;
They swung on, the wish of the West to imbibe.

Eternal the sun-cycle, sure of its bounds,
Folds over its rounds.
And men, as it hastens,
Their growth-madness chastens
To run from their wounds,
To follow and strive to leap over their mounds.

At length, as he rises—behold, on the verge
He sees 'cross the surge
Of an ocean titanic.
Exults oceanic

His hopes as they merge,
Through the thick of the vapor, with History's dirge.

From coasting along the Past's prenatal strands,
The midshipman lands,
To seek and discover
The losses whereover
The Past broods, and stands
The Zeitgeist to view in its swaddling bands.

To taste of beginnings, to look to the West
With the eyes of a guest
In the house of the ancient—
A vision presentient,
A reason possessed
Of a sight that, eternal, sees only the best.

To come to the study of annals as such
Who endured overmuch
In the test of their muscles;
Descend into fossils
Of History, clutch
The robe of the years that have fleeted his touch;

Attack from the rear the problems that dare
To follow and snare
The feet of the aimer--
To enter disclaimer
Of all that was there
And tread out the errors of monarch and seer.

Explorer no more—since the trace of the wheel
Through one round may reveal

The test of avoidance
And leave for his guidance
The mark of the heel
Of the first parent cycle, the first human zeal.

• • • •

Eternal the sun-cycle, certain and bold,
From the new to the old,
Continues its manner—
Let man and his banner
Sweep on to behold
Where the first heart bent westward, but ever
for gold.

Nor ever the carcass of History feed
To his ravishing greed.
What passion thou starvest
Will bring to the harvest
A mold where the weed
Of one season lies dead for the next season's
seed.

Forward, with uncovered heads, may we greet
The East at our feet—
With eyes that are humble,
Lest History stumble
And stoop to repeat
The first cycle's errand of faith's misconceit.

• • • •

The eyes of the worshiper looked on thy grace
From his eastern place.

A western danger
Clouds over the manger
Of this newborn race.
Halt, worshiper—West and East glare face to
face.

A VOICE FROM THE ANTILLES.

| T is the time ! The hand that swung the bell
That made the morn of liberty strike one
Proclaims today another slavery's knell —
A tardy hour for slavery's setting sun !

It is the time when Freedom's steeple clock
Detones the hour in deep appeal to arms—
To arms ! The hour ! For yonder crowing cock
Halts in his matins at no vain alarms.

The hour to think that man has manhood left,
Nor woman less ; the echo of an hour
When puppet kings went down, and crowns were
cleft
Before the kings of a diviner power.

It is the time to bastinade the brute,
To shed life's color—e'en the assassin's use
Was God's way when Canovas fell, the fruit
Of a gone summer's seed of false excuse.

By yonder sign of wreckage in the bay
Is born no spirit of an idle tear ;
Three hundred dead men call upon their clay
To crush the serpent from the western sphere.

Her cup of history is full of blood,
And some has spilled on other shores and heads,

* Written in 1898, and published with apologies to my present convictions.]

Soaked under foot and soiled Columbia's hood.
Shall Freedom falter where such history treads?

Ye souls that scent the shambles at your door
And can discern a maiden's anguished cries
Amid the brothel jeers from yonder shore—
Daily death stalks in diplomatic guise.

It is the time, and oh, for hearts to beat
The minutes of it! Not for hands the prayer;
For hands there are a-ready at the gate,
To loose the latchet when the heart is there.

For hearts alone; and then the clangling bell
May mix its metal with defiant tone—
To ring the butcher and the brute to hell,
To ring the hounded monarch to the throne.

PARENTAGE.

THE gullies in the woods are heaped with leaves.
Unsorted out, they fade from their last brown
To dissolution, where the earth-pulp gives
One faithful promise of a saving crown—
Where lies, possessed in patience and its moods,
Each scion of the sap of yesterday,
Knowing its dreams will blossom when the woods
Shall glut their roots next year in its decay.

But did you see from which vibrating branch
They each one fell and mingled with the rest ?
Or whether twigs went sorting in the trench—
To claim their foliage, in some volume pressed ?
Did yonder branch the fruitage plagiarize
Of this sage hemlock, and the tree frogs croak
At some leaf-shape that they could criticise—
The maple vying to outdress the oak ?

A proud nativity to be a tree !
But being one—I frighten at the thought
(A human maker I, the same as thee),
Of one leaf lost, though fruitage ended not ;
Of one leaf worn upon a queenly breast,
Asking not where 'twas plucked, nor whether meant
Above another to adorn her taste—
Is good so good as when it has descent ?

No tree could e'er so travail through the night—
Pain at the throe, or at beholding, joy !
The crypt, the ripening, the bloom, the blight
Accrue one process that the years destroy.

But I with fancy wrestled, breast to breast,
That tempted, but would not enlighten me ;
And when at dawn I cried, "Till I am blest,
I will not let thee go," she set me free.

'Round and around, by that same appetite
Received and purged within the world's recess,
These forest-poems twinkle in the light
And shatter in the season of release.
They meditate a time within the sheaf
Ere putting forth their consummated leaves,
Solemn they join the sum, but not with grief—
'Round and around they fall into their graves.

But what are graves ? The chyme-pits duly filled
With last year's fruitage—promise of the next.
From cycle unto cycle wealth is spilled
Into the earth and reason saints perplexed.
Digestion cosmic ! Food ! Is that my end ?
That yonder age of oaks and elms may thrive ?
A pittance of remembrance may descend
Upon me ! That is all—to strive, to strive !

A LAST RESORT.

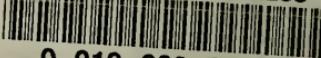
VICE, mad at being fingered at and scorned,
For all his candor, when the least adorned ;
And being hunted from each fresh disguise,
Sought refuge, like the canker, from our eyes
Within the choicest hot-bed flower of all—
The nation's letters, sold at yonder stall.
Lo, find him, writers, nestled in the page
Of that same book you fashioned for an age.
What were the book without your name thereto ?
And damn unperfumed words, though they be true!
“I'll have a cover, too—apparel wins,”
Exults the sweet-meat man; and Vice—he grins.



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